AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony, including:

(a) receiving a message from a source at an intermediate point ~~a router~~ between the source and a destination, said intermediate point ~~router~~ including at least one port having a time out period within which the destination may send messages to the source via the intermediate point;

(b) sending at least a portion of the message from the intermediate point to [[a]] the destination over the Internet;

(c) sending a response to the message from the destination to the intermediate point over the Internet within the time out period;

(d) sending the response from the intermediate point to the source;

(e) sending a reply to the response from the source to the intermediate point;

([[e]] f) preventing the port from timing out by repeatedly sending ~~other~~ subsequent messages from the destination over the Internet to the intermediate point;

([[f]] g) sending at least a portion of corresponding ones of the ~~other~~ subsequent messages from the intermediate point to the source; and

([[g]] h) sending ~~responses~~ replies to the portion of the ~~other~~ subsequent messages from the source to the intermediate point.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein step ([[e]] f) includes repeatedly sending the ~~at least one of the~~ subsequent messages at a time interval less than ~~within~~ the time out period.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) An enhanced Internet telephony system, including:

a message source;

an intermediate point ~~a router~~ between the message source and a destination, including at least one port having a time out period within which the destination may send messages to the source via the intermediate point, [[and]] said intermediate point

being coupled to receive a message from the source and to send at least a portion of the message to the Internet;

[[a]] the destination coupled to receive the message from the intermediate point, to send a response to the message to the intermediate point over the Internet within the time out period, and to prevent the port from timing out by repeatedly sending ~~other~~ subsequent messages over the Internet to the intermediate point;

wherein the message source is coupled to the intermediate point so as to send ~~responses to the other messages~~ replies to the response message and the subsequent messages.

6. (Currently Amended) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 5, wherein the destination comprises a server coupled to send at least one of the ~~other~~ subsequent messages within the time out period.

7. (Original) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the source comprises a media terminal adapter.

8. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 2, wherein the intermediate point is a router.

9. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 2, wherein the current time out period restarts upon arrival at the intermediate point of a message from the destination.

10. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 2, wherein the current time out period restarts upon arrival at the intermediate point of a reply from the source.

11. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 2, wherein the intermediate point assigns a new network address to the at least one port at the end of the time out period.

12. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 11, wherein the intermediate point assigns the new network address according to Dynamic Host Computer Protocol.

13. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 2, wherein the messages are telephony signaling messages.

14. (New) A method of providing enhanced Internet telephony according to claim 13, wherein the signaling messages are session initiation protocol (SIP) messages.

15. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 5, wherein the intermediate point is a router.

16. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 5, wherein the current time out period restarts upon arrival at the intermediate point of a message from the destination.

17. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 5, wherein the current time out period restarts upon arrival at the intermediate point of a reply from the message source.

18. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 5, wherein the intermediate point assigns a new network address to the at least one port at the end of the time out period.

19. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 18, wherein the intermediate point assigns the new network address according to Dynamic Host Computer Protocol.

20. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 5, wherein the messages are telephony signaling messages.

21. (New) An enhanced Internet telephony system according to claim 20, wherein the signaling messages are session initiation protocol (SIP) messages.

22. (New) In an Internet telephony system comprising:

a message source adapted to generate and receive call setup messages in a signaling packet protocol and to generate and receive communication packet streams in a packet stream protocol,

an intermediate point coupled between the message source and a network, said intermediate unit including at least one port having a time out condition, and

a signaling destination coupled to the network and adapted to generate and receive signaling messages according to the signaling packet protocol;

the improvement wherein the signaling destination prevents the port from meeting the time out condition during a user telephony communication by repeatedly requesting signaling message replies from the message source via the intermediate point after call setup has been established.

23. (New) An Internet telephony system according to claim 22, wherein the intermediate point is a router.

24. (New) An Internet telephony system according to claim 22, wherein the current time out condition resets upon arrival at the intermediate point of the request for signaling message reply from the signaling destination.

25. (New) An Internet telephony system according to claim 22, wherein the current time out condition resets upon arrival at the intermediate point of a signaling message reply from the message source.

26. (New) An Internet telephony system according to claim 22, wherein the intermediate point assigns a new network address to the at least one port when the time out condition is met.

27. (New) An Internet telephony system according to claim 26, wherein the intermediate point assigns the new network address according to Dynamic Host Computer Protocol.

28. (New) An Internet telephony system according to claim 22, wherein the signaling messages are session initiation protocol (SIP) messages.